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# VERSES

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# **“VERSES”**

**BY**

**EDNA DE FREMERY**



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## SPRING

### I.

I lived within a city street  
Where never lingered sunbeam fleet  
Or happy singing bird.  
But close outside my window grew  
A stunted, sickly tree that knew  
Spring's innocence had stirred,  
And putting forth a first pale shoot  
Of tender green, defied the soot.

### II.

My heart had lived in darkness, till  
Like Spring upon the window-sill  
Love bade me live anew.  
So, in gold vapours of the dawn  
New life into my heart was born—  
New life that was for you.  
It flowered on my lips, a word—  
All trembling, faint, but still, you heard.

## ROME

### I.

Noon, and the summer blue Italian skies  
Thrilling the hour—  
There under sad purple cypress, lies  
A white flower.

### II.

Bells through the golden air, to prayer calling—  
A fountain's voice.  
Sounds in an antique garden, falling, falling  
Its tears, rejoice.

### III.

You, that were all to me, living, dying—  
Love, hope, and all—  
Dear, you are free from earth's sorrow, and  
sighing,  
But my tears fall.

## HOW MANY WAYS

### I.

How many ways do I love you, dear?  
Tell me, how many leaves there be  
Ere the winds set free from the orchard's gold  
The million minted leaves that hold  
The carvings of eternity—  
So many ways do I love you, dear.

### II.

How many ways do I love, again?  
Tell me, how many tears there are  
In a world in chains, of war's bitter pains  
Sending its crimson across the main—  
And crying up to a burning star  
So many ways do I love, again.



## A GIFT

### I.

A royal gift, you have bestowed on me  
Oh my belovèd. What my lips may give  
In whispered gratitude will ever live  
Deep in my heart. Your gift has made me see  
Beyond the known, into infinity—  
New vision to my eyes that used to grieve  
O'er the dull pattern that my hands must  
weave  
In woof of frieze, upon Life's tapestry.  
Now, on my loom, love blossoms like a star  
That trembles in illimitable night  
Like shining words God whispers from afar—  
Your gold thread, for my flax, will now requite  
Oh beautiful the fabric, in my sight—  
Beyond the power of life, or death to mar.

## ADIEUX

### I.

Never the sickle moon  
In the sky,  
Never the rose of May,  
Ere it die,  
Will bring at evening, still,  
Aught, to my window-sill  
But grief, and falling tears.  
Through the long, lonely years  
Love, will not die.

## MASQUERADE

### I

Do you remember, how, a year ago  
I came to you, in an old fashioned gown?  
The pale moon in the sky hung low  
The light of the candles had burned down—  
I half feared your frown for my fanciful dress  
But now, I know, you loved me so.

### II.

The flowers I held in my bouquet  
Were sweet red roses and mignonette  
They were the first to hear you say  
What they, nor I, will e'er forget.  
Their breath was a delicate perfume  
That filled the room.

### III.

We said that we two would love for aye  
As long as winds should kiss the sea  
As long as flowers seek the sun  
We promised to love, for eternity—  
Ah, don't you see, 'twas on a night of mas-  
querade  
Our vows were made?

## PARTING

### I.

Parting is like death, they say—  
Yet no flowers cover me  
And the shadows on my head  
Fall not, from cypress tree.  
Green is the spring about me  
With jeweled rain drops set  
And I, with tears, remember—  
Do you, afar, forget?

## SISTER DOLORES

### I.

As that scarred hill, which yesterday was green  
So, I, my Lord, in this dark garb of woe  
Unnatural, that shrouds me, as I go—  
Bear outward witness, to the soul thou'st  
seen.

The silence! Ah the silence prisons thought—  
And consciousness but mocks this show of  
death

This apeing of tranquillity my breath  
Denies. When singing birds in snares are  
caught

Surely their wings, that beat against the bars  
Cannot be music to God's listening ear.

If I did grievous sin, who only loved brave  
youth—

Bright flowers and sunshine and the happy  
truth

Of laughter, that is holier than tears

Then no bird's song, should rise up, 'neath the  
stars.

## AN ALTAR

### I.

I raised an altar in my heart  
And worshipped there—  
I held it sacred and apart  
From daily care  
And thoughts were flowers offered there  
And for sweet incense, rose my prayer.

### II.

What matters it, if gods have flown  
And no one hears?  
This sacrifice must fain atone—  
And falling tears  
Wipe out the memory of hurts unseen—  
And love remain, where faith has never been.

## RETROSPECTION

### I.

After long years, to see again—  
The house I shared with youth—  
How small the windows, whose narrow panes  
I thought looked out on truth.

### II.

How steep the stairs, and strict the door  
That will not yield to me—  
I should have turned back long before,  
Truth was within, you see.

## ANTICIPATION

### I.

I pray that the day will die,  
Will faint, in the arms of night—  
That the first star in the sky  
May show me its holy light.

### II.

I pray that the haste of youth  
Life's joy, and fever, and pain  
May be hushed, in love's great truth  
Nor call to my soul, again.



## THE SUN KING

### I.

Lord of the wastes—the royal sun  
Scatters his largesse on the sands—  
Under the shade of the date palms, run  
Timid shadows, who fear his hand.

### II.

The desert burns in triumphant light—  
Yielding a dream to one adored—  
Her gifts are roses, red, and white  
And golden silence, for her lord.

## SEA VOICES

### I.

Beyond the light of the headland bar—  
Beyond the city's iron grasp—  
Where the gray smoke turns to a crimson mar,  
And black masts twist in the harbor's clasp.

### II.

There, under heaven, and free from earth—  
The great winds sing, in an ecstasy  
Of mighty freedom, and swift rebirth  
In sea songs of eternity.

## VALLOMBROSA

### I.

Once more, in Vallombrosa, under the moon  
Hung in the skies,  
Like a silver lamp, lit too soon  
Ere the day dies.

### II.

On the terrace, gray, marble, and moss grown  
Red roses fall—  
Sweet is their fragrance, faint, and I hear a lone  
Nightingale's call.

### III.

Why should all other things, be fair and the  
same?  
You are not here.  
If from that other world, you would but speak  
my name  
My dear, my dear.

## VENICE

### I.

Ah, Venice, fairest city of the seas—  
Lying with golden light upon your spires  
You are the vision of my happiest ease  
You are the very dream of my desires.

### II.

With my own eyes, I may not look on you  
Or learn the azure winding of your ways—  
But in my home bound heart a thought sings  
    true  
No miles can hide you from my spirit's gaze.

## ANNUNCIATION

### I.

A summer noon, in Nazareth of old—  
And in a garden, dreamed a Maid,  
Around Her, nodding lilies, starred with gold,  
And pure white doves, with coral feet, had  
    strayed.

### II.

From out the village, came the sound and calls  
Of children, playing in the dusty street,  
But in the garden holy silence falls,  
And God's bright angels, kneel at Mary's feet.

## PALESTINE

### I.

Twilight, before the hills of Palestine  
Sad colored, like the lives of saints,  
Stretching their pure and mystic line  
Toward the east, where daylight faints.

### II.

Age old, and melancholy rocks  
A guarding shepherd, faintly heard—  
Calling his white fleeced, patient flocks  
Are these the echo of thy Word?

## HOPE

### I.

You will come back to me, some day, I know—  
Whether the years, or death, shall keep apart  
Our lives for earth's brief span. In every heart  
God's placed his touchstone, Hope. The sea  
birds go

Daring abysmal depths, and starless night  
Fearless, before the ruthless winds of heaven—  
That wound, and buffet them, while still,  
storm driven

They breast the sky, to find home in their  
flight.

There is no meanest creature on the earth  
But can, for love, be noble and be brave.  
You will come back to me, some day, I know  
And in the crucible of years, I'll save  
All worthy things of bravery and mirth,  
Mixed with the tears you would not have me  
show.

## WANDERLUST

### I.

A silver path through the Golden Gate  
The salty breath of the open sea—  
I ask no more of the winds of Fate,  
Than to fly before them, and so, be free.

### II.

To sail to the lands of far away  
O'er changing waters, of blue and green  
To touch at the shores of far Cathay,  
And tropic isles I have never seen.

### III.

For I am sick of the sight of home  
That never was home, to the heart of me:  
The body may stay, but the soul will roam  
I've always longed for the open sea.



## THY PEOPLE

### I.

Thy sword is red, Oh Sultan!  
But the moonlight silvers, nightly,  
The marble of the palace, where ladies,  
    treading lightly  
With officers in turban  
Weave a scarlet thread of passion—  
The perfume of the flowers, and dance  
    of latest fashion  
Soft music's rhythmic falling  
Still the voices that are calling  
"Thy sword is red, Oh Sultan!  
And we die, beneath thy ban."

## KISMET

### I.

Into the blue that waits outside the door  
From out the latticed court, the Sultan goes  
The singing of the fountain's voice, no more  
Will softly wake him, from a sweet repose.

### II.

Or lips of curving crimson, touch his cheek  
And in his ear, tell secrets of Stamboul—  
'Twill naught avail, for favour there to seek  
And who wastes kisses, but an empty fool?

## IF, AFTER DAY—

### I.

If, after day, the tender twilight holds  
Fair tints of purest hue, ethereal rose  
That, in the east, in fainting beauty glows  
Laved in the largesse of the sun's spent gold—  
If, after day, a single silver star  
In perfect splendor, dawns upon the night  
And all my being answers, at the sight  
As though I saw Faith's symbol, there set high  
For lovers' eyes, if, after day, I lie,  
Wrapped in the dim divinity of dreams  
And hear your voice, and live again the hour  
That speaks in music, answers in a flower  
Making all beauty, all happiness, all tears  
Your gift to me—Ah, after day, the dreams!

## A DREAM

### I.

I had a dream last night  
After my tears—  
In darkness, dawned a light  
Calming my fears—  
I saw my own dead child  
Moving, with others mild  
Holding a light on high,  
Turning, to heed my cry  
With outstretched arm.

### II.

Then, in my dream he spoke  
Soft to my woe—  
“Mother, when first I woke  
Your tears fell so  
The light I hold on high  
For new soul's, passing by  
Flickered, and would not go—  
I come, that you may know,  
Such tears do harm.”

## TO MY MOTHER

### I.

I heard of Heaven—free from strife  
For all true souls of perfect will  
But you have made the gift of life  
So dear, I long to keep it still  
All other worlds I would forego  
To share this, with the heart I know.

### II.

I heard there's nothing lasting here  
But permanence above—  
Back from that thought I turn in fear  
To shelter in your lasting love.  
No saint in Paradise could be  
What you, on earth, are now, to me.









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